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# TIME

BY FLORENCE EARLE COATES

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WHAT thought can measure Time?—  
Tell its beginning, name  
The void from which it first, faint-pulsing, came?—  
Follow its onward going,—  
A restless river without tumult flowing,—  
Or with sure footing climb  
Unto its unlit altitudes sublime?

What thought can trace the wonders it hath seen—  
Time, the creator of all that hath been,  
Giver of bounty where was dearth,  
Bringer of miracles to birth:  
Time through whose office is the seedling sown,  
The fruit up-gathered, the ripe harvest mown,  
And beauty made to glorify the earth?

Before the land took shape and rose  
Black and chaotic from the old, old sea,  
Before the stars their courses chose,  
Before the moon's most ancient memory,  
Time to Earth's vision, veiled in night, appears  
Back of the viewless cycles of the years.

The Hours, his little children, run  
Lightly upon his errands ever;  
By sure and swift relays is done  
His will, disputed never;  
The while these transient Hours infirm  
Measure of mortal things the destined term.

Ah, me, the days! the heavy-weighted years,  
Each with its Spring and Winter, dusk and dawn!  
The centuries, with all their joys, their tears,  
That came, and now—so utterly are gone!  
Gone whither? whither vanished so?  
Does broad Orion, or does Hesper know?

There comes no answer. Are we dupes, indeed,—  
Offspring of Time, by Time relentless slain,  
Our purest aspirations dreamed in vain?  
Ah, no: man's soul indignant doth disdain  
Ignoble vassalage to such a creed,  
Well-knowing it is free,—  
Aye, free!—for present, past, and future blend,  
The segments of a circle without end,  
Losing themselves in one, unbounded Eternity!

FLORENCE EARLE COATES.